

For More Information on Marijuana and Other Illegal Drugs:

Marijuana & Meth educational website provided by HIDTA & Office of Lieutenant Governor

Brad Owen



www.mfiles.org



Washington State Alcohol and Drug Clearinghouse
1-(800) 662-9111

<http://clearinghouse.adhl.org/>



24 Hour Washington State Alcohol/Drug Helpline

1-(800) 562-1240
<http://www.adhl.org/>



Produced by
Northwest HIDTA



Washington State Office of Lieutenant Governor
Brad Owen



Confronting Problems

MYTH:

MYTH: Marijuana makes all your problems go away.

FACT:

FACT: "A series of in-depth case studies by a research team at the Center for Psychosocial Studies in New York found that adults who smoked marijuana daily believed it helped them function better, improving self awareness and relationships with others. However, researchers found that users were actually more willing to tolerate problems, suggesting that the drug served as a buffer for those who would rather avoid confronting problems than make changes that might increase their satisfaction with life. The study indicated that these subjects used marijuana to avoid dealing with their difficulties and the avoidance inevitably made their problems worse. Although users believed the drug enhanced understanding of themselves, it actually served as a barrier to self-awareness."

— National Institute on Drug Abuse



"The risks associated with marijuana have been trivialized and our kids are getting the wrong message. It is time to dispel the myths about marijuana. The facts are compelling, but we must arm parents, teachers, community leaders and our children with the truth. Outdated and false perceptions about the drug are putting today's kids at risk."

—John P. Walters, director,
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Addiction

MYTH:

MYTH: Marijuana is not addictive.

FACT:

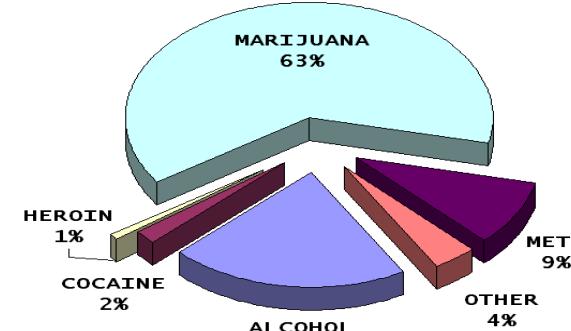
FACT: As with alcohol and many other drugs, not everyone who uses marijuana becomes addicted, but many users have developed dependence on the drug. They may experience such withdrawal symptoms as loss of appetite, sleep problems, weight loss, and shaky hands. In 2002, 4,162 adolescents within Washington State, entered drug treatment programs to kick their marijuana habit.

—Department of Social and Health Services, (DSHS)

—Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, (DASA)

2002 Youth Treatment Admissions

Ages 12-17



—Treatment and Assessment Report Generation Tool (TARGET), (DASA)

Incarceration

MYTH:

MYTH: There are thousands of individuals in our jails and prisons for possession of a joint of marijuana.

FACT:

FACT: Washington State has never put anyone in prison for possession of a joint of marijuana. In fact possession of less than 40 grams of marijuana is a misdemeanor which normally results in a fine & suspended sentence. Individuals with multiple offenses and/or failing to comply with court rulings on previous convictions are serving time in our country's jails & prisons.

—DOC, Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Association

Say it Straight!

Marijuana

Myth vs. Fact

Winter 2004

Scientists vs. Legalizers

Marijuana as a medicine is the Trojan horse of the new millennium. The claim that marijuana can be used as medicine is proving to be one of the worst scams drug legalizers have perpetrated on the American people. In reality, smoked marijuana is far too complex, unstable, and harmful of a substance to be approved as a medicine. In every instance claimed by legalizers as a use for smoked marijuana, there exist far better, legitimate, scientifically approved medications. Science, not public opinion, must drive the practice of medicine. Scientists are engaged in research to determine whether there are, indeed, potential medical uses for marijuana.

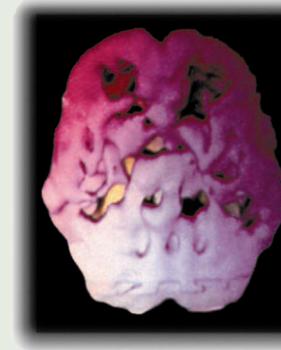
Brain Imaging

MYTH: Marijuana doesn't affect the brain.

FACT: When marijuana is smoked, its active ingredient THC travels throughout the body, including the brain, to produce its many effects. THC attaches to sites called cannabinoid receptors on nerve cells in the brain, affecting the way those cells work. Cannabinoid receptors are abundant in parts of the brain that regulate movement, coordination, learning and memory, higher cognitive functions such as judgment, and pleasure.



Brain with normal blood flow



12 years of marijuana

Where's the Benefit?

There is NO proof that smoking marijuana has any health benefits. Yet there is plenty of evidence that it is harmful to both your body and brain, and contributes to risky behaviors and adverse physical and social consequences. NOT to mention smoking any substance, whether tobacco or marijuana, increases your risk of developing cancer, pneumonia and other illnesses. Smoked marijuana is unsafe for use, even under medical supervision.

— Andrea G. Barthwell, M.D.,
Office of National Drug Control Policy



Get the Facts

Marijuana is the Nation's most commonly used illegal drug. More than **83** million Americans (**37 percent**) age 12 and older have tried marijuana at least once, according to the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse.



"The War on Drugs has Failed."

MYTH:

MYTH: Legalizers claim that the war on drugs has failed, and that legalization or decriminalization is the only solution to the drug and incarceration problem.

FACT:

FACT: There has never been a war on drugs! There has been concentrated effort by the government and many people against harmful, illegal drug use. Parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, health officials, media, and youth are working together to solve the drug crisis. While there is still much to be done, significant progress has been made. Since 1979, the number of users of illegal drugs has declined from **24** million to **114** million. Daily use of marijuana by high school seniors has decreased from **10.7%** to **2.4%**.

— www.monosheriff.org/subdrugs/drugmyth.htm

State Patrol Combats Illegal Drugs

"Marijuana use is associated with many detrimental health effects that not only impact the individual using it but our healthcare systems and public services. These include frequent respiratory infection, impaired memory and learning, increased heart rate, anxiety and panic attacks. Marijuana is also associated with criminal behavior. As a result, **40.8%** of males being booked into Washington State jails for all types of crimes committed, tested positive for marijuana. The state-wide Eradication Program was able to remove **61,313** marijuana plants through November of **2003**, a **72%** increase over the same time in **2002**."



— Lieutenant Richard Wiley,
Washington State Patrol Narcotics Section

Is Marijuana Safe?

MYTH:

MYTH: "Marijuana must be good for you; it's medicine."

FACT:

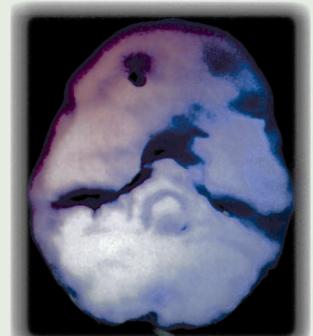
FACT: "Marijuana is NOT a medicine. Marijuana smoke and cigarette smoke contain many of the same toxins, including one which has been identified as a key factor in the promotion of lung cancer. This toxin is found in the tar phase of both, and it should be noted that one joint has four times more tar than a cigarette, which means that the lungs are exposed fourfold to this toxin and others in the tar. It has been concretely established that smoking cigarettes promotes lung cancer which causes more than 125,000 deaths in the US every year, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (chronic bronchitis and emphysema) and increased incidence of respiratory tract infections. This implies, but does not establish, that smoking marijuana may lead to some of the same results as smoking cigarettes. In addition, marijuana use has many indirect effects on health. Its effect on coordination, perception, and judgment means that it causes a number of accidents, vehicular and otherwise."



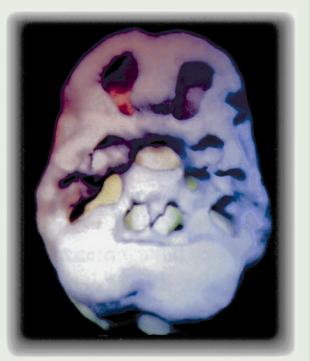
Talk with your Kids about Drugs

"Marijuana is NOT a rite of passage but a dangerous behavior that could have serious health consequences. Parents must realize that what they tell their children about drug use makes a difference."

—Richard Carmona, M.D.,
U.S. Surgeon General



Normal brain



Marijuana affected brain